

**ENFIELD TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2015**

A Special Meeting of the Enfield Town Council and Planning & Zoning Commission was called to order by Chairman Kaupin in the Enfield Room of the Enfield Town Hall, 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, Connecticut on Wednesday, February 18, 2015. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

**ROLL-CALL** – Present were Councilors Arnone, Cekala, Deni, Edgar, Kaupin, Lee, Mangini and Szewczak. Councilor Hall entered at 7:30 p.m. Councilors Bosco and Stokes were absent. Also present were Town Manager, Matthew Coppler; Assistant Town Manager of Development Services, Courtney Hendricson; Director of Community Development and Acting Planning Director, Peter Bryanton

Present from the Planning & Zoning Commission were Elizabeth Ballard, Charles Duren, Charles Ladd, Nicles Lefakis, Kathleen Sarno and Lori Longhi

**DISCUSSION RE: THOMPSONVILLE REVITALIZATION GOALS**

Chairman Kaupin stated about a month ago there was a quarterly Council of Chairs meeting and Mr. Duren and Ms. Longhi were in attendance. He noted one of the issues discussed was that Planning & Zoning had a big task before them concerning rezoning in Thompsonville. He noted Planning & Zoning wanted feedback from the Town Council concerning this issue.

He noted it was decided to have a presentation by the Town Manager concerning this topic and an opportunity for both bodies to discuss this issue.

Mr. Coppler stated the Town Council adopted about nine pages of goals in 2014. As concerns economic development, he noted the Council determined three of the five initiatives would focus on the redevelopment of Thompsonville. He noted one of those three initiatives was the need for zoning changes in the Thompsonville area. He stated at that point in time, the Cecil Group had already completed their study, which was done in 2013. He noted there are sections of the Plan of Conservation and Development that discuss the same thing. He stated Goal #3 talks about diverse transportation goals, and 3.41 talks about mixed use and transit-oriented development in Thompsonville. He stated Goal #5 talks about maintaining regional competitiveness and provides zoning to incorporate new building height requirements, primarily Thompsonville along the Connecticut River. He noted the Council and Planning & Zoning had the same goal.

He stated the results of the study indicate the potential for a significant and economic impact for transit oriented development. He noted the Town's ability to capture that economic impact is constrained by the current zoning. He stated something needs to be done to capture and maximize the benefit of the development potential that comes with transit-oriented development.

Mr. Coppler stated the potential for new development ranges from between 126,000 to 445,000 square feet, and this could result in 51 to 185 new jobs. He noted from a fiscal standpoint, they could see a boost from \$400,000 to \$1.6 million dollars of new tax dollars, which will increase the tax base. He noted they can't get there without a zoning change.

He stated what's physically on the ground in Thompsonville is not how it's zoned. He noted it's zoned R33, and the average lot size is 8,500 sq ft. He stated almost every lot in Thompsonville is non-conforming. He noted rezoning Thompsonville is actually a good thing because it will lessen the inequity that happens now between Thompsonville and the rest of the town. He stated if they re-zone, they will spur re-investment, and this will allow people to improve or add onto their property, and this will increase the value of property.

Mr. Coppler stated the Cecil Group did a study which looked at three major zoning changes in the Thompsonville area. He noted the first one, which Planning & Zoning is currently working on, is TVR ("Thompsonville Village Residential" district). He noted another one is the MTRA (the new "Multi-Modal Transit River Access" district). He stated the third major area is the TMD ("Transit Oriented Development" district).

He stated the proposed zoning change for the TVR district would allow for 10 dwellings per acre instead of 1.25 dwellings per acre. He noted another change would be in the height of buildings from 35 feet to 40 feet in height, which amounts to three stories.

Councilor Mangini stated they might want to establish a maximum regarding how many bedrooms are allowed in a residence. Mr. Bryanton pointed out the market demand is for bigger units, not smaller.

Chairman Kaupin questioned what the recommendations from the Cecil Group are based upon, and Mr. Bryanton stated their recommendations are based upon similar demographics and areas such as Thompsonville.

Ms. Longhi stated her belief Thompsonville is already densely populated. She noted there's more than enough affordable housing in Thompsonville. She pointed out there are only 31 towns in the State of Connecticut that have reached their quota of affordable housing, and Enfield met that quota.

Ms. Longhi stated she is concerned about the latest study for Thompsonville because there are mistakes in this study. She noted the mistakes keep getting carried forward and people don't realize they're looking at inaccurate data and some of that is manipulated data. She stated she has lost faith in some of the information that Planning & Zoning is getting.

Mr. Coppler questioned what study specifically contains inaccurate data.

Ms. Longhi responded the Cecil Group study. She noted all members of the Planning & Zoning don't have the complete study. She stated on this particular study, she immediately noticed that the demographic overview between Enfield and Thompsonville was reversed. She pointed out they have the demographic median household income at \$51,000 for Thompsonville and Enfield at \$31,000, which shows it's flip-flopped the other way from the census information.

Ms. Longhi stated the more she looked at this study, the more discrepancies that she found in it and the less faith she had on this study. She noted Planning & Zoning receives these studies, however, they don't have the right or the opportunity to say what's wrong about those studies or the things that they don't find valid. She noted they're trying to do the right thing for the Town, but they have a bunch of scattered information, which makes it difficult to know what they should be doing. She stated she doesn't know what the Cecil Group was basing their information on and what is a typical town and whether they looked at an already dense Thompsonville.

Mr. Coppler stated the Cecil Group study was given to Planning & Zoning in a presentation and in draft form.

Ms. Longhi stated Planning & Zoning still has just a draft of the study.

Councilor Lee stated if the Commission isn't comfortable with that density, they can change that.

Chairman Duren and Ms. Longhi stated the entire Planning & Zoning Commission is not comfortable with the density.

Councilor Lee stated the person from the Cecil Group was coming up with recommendations that were going to allow improvements, but be mindful of the historic character and existing structures.

Councilor Deni questioned why there's a regulation to 40 feet, and Ms. Sarno pointed out fire trucks can only go so high.

Councilor Edgar stated a lot of this isn't much different than the Shapiro Study. He stated the density bothers him too. He went on to state his belief that according to the Town Charter, the Town Council shouldn't be trying to influence Planning & Zoning. He agreed they can discuss things.

Mr. Duren stated Planning & Zoning welcomes input.

Councilor Edgar stated his impression they are asking Planning & Zoning to make these changes while he sees it as putting the cart before the horse. Mr. Coppler stated if they zone things the right way, all the controls are in place to get the type of development they want.

Councilor Arnone stated his impression this is looking at putting in a Blue Back Square in the Thompsonville area, and Mr. Bryanton responded that wouldn't be the case in the residential area.

Ms. Sarno stated the only study she's ever seen is the Cecil Study. She agreed planning is important before doing something. She agreed they do need to look at Thompsonville, but not worry about high rises. She stated fire apparatus can only go so high.

Ms. Longhi stated they have not heard any complaints from Thompsonville residents about the inability to expand. She stated her belief they should have mixed use in certain areas, however, she's not convinced about adding density.

Chairman Kaupin stated he would not want to see density increased, and he wouldn't want to see efficiencies spread around Thompsonville. He stated he doesn't agree about going crazy with too many units per acre.

Ms. Longhi stated they are trying to be very cautious. She suggested perhaps they should be talking about an overlay district where developers could come in and present something versus changing things for the whole area.

Councilor Edgar stated parking is another consideration for multi-families. He stated his understanding there's a parking study, however, he hasn't seen it.

Mr. Bryanton stated other communities have a shared parking agreement. He cited Bigelow Commons as an example. He noted the Town would maintain a certain part of the lot if people were allowed to use that part of the lot.

Councilor Szewczak questioned whether owner-occupied housing has been considered. Mr. Bryanton stated that can be done if there's some affordable housing or first time home buyer program.

Mr. Duren stated Planning & Zoning needs a clean copy of the study.

Ms. Longhi stated Planning & Zoning members agree about not wanting the density.

Councilor Lee questioned how is on-street parking looked at today, and is it counted in what's allowed in a unit. Mr. Duren stated municipal lots can be used as part of their parking requirements.

Councilor Lee questioned whether the Cecil Group addressed what's typical in a transit zone regarding parking, and Mr. Bryanton stated while the parking plan isn't yet complete, this issue will be addressed within the parking plan.

Referring to the parking study, Ms. Longhi noted an on-street parking analysis was done downtown from the time period of 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., which is when most people are not around. She noted parking is tight during snow bans

at night after 7:00 p.m. while residents are all at home. She stated she would have liked the parking inventory done when there were actually people at home and not in the middle of the day when people are at work. She noted Planning & Zoning thought the parking study should have been done before they ever looked at the zone changes because if there's not enough parking, they don't want more density. She stated she's in the Thompsonville area enough that she knows there's a different parking dynamics at 7:00 p.m. than at 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Coppler questioned what's the specific question Ms. Longhi has for the parking study, and Ms. Longhi stated she would like to know what the parking counts are at the time people are home from work and not in the middle of the day when no one is home. Mr. Coppler questioned whether an explanation was given for taking the counts when they did, and Ms. Longhi responded no. Mr. Coppler requested Mr. Bryanton check into these two questions, and he requested the response be put in writing.

Ms. Longhi stated creating more density is making the parking situation worse.

Councilor Edgar stated he read something about allowing diagonal parking in Thompsonville. He questioned where such parking would be allowed.

Councilor Lee stated if the density number changes, does that kick off a whole cascade of other edits to what some of the drafts look like today. Mr. Bryanton stated they're really at the starting point, therefore, it can be whatever they want it to be.

Councilor Deni agreed that they have to be careful about the density. He stated his impression everyone agrees about this.

Councilor Lee stated his impression starting lower, and then moving higher down the road is a lot easier than going too high and then trying to back it down. He went on to state his belief that starting with the TVR is smart because it would be dealing with things that they've been struggling with all along. As concerns the worry about building heights, he noted 40 feet is pretty much the standard elsewhere.

Councilor Lee stated if Planning & Zoning wants input, how is that properly done from a Councilor's perspective. Mr. Duren noted input could come in the planning mode. Mr. Coppler added if one member of the Town Council goes and speaks before Planning, that would be just that individual speaking and not the whole Council speaking.

Ms. Longhi stated her belief this evening's meeting was very helpful. She suggested as they're going through this process, perhaps they could meet once a quarter to have similar exchanges to learn what the issues are. She noted the more united they are, the better it is for the community.

Councilor Hall stated her belief the Council does the visionary part and the zoning part of it is the people that make the decisions. She agreed quarterly meetings are very helpful.

Mr. Duren stated the Planning & Zoning Commission needs a clean copy of the TVR portion.

Chairman Kaupin stated he envisions classic, New England, village housing. He stated he doesn't want to see density raised, but rather he wants to see the charm maintained, and he'd like to see multiple types of housing, i.e., one bedroom to three bedroom housing. He noted he wouldn't want to see a couple blocks leveled so they can build one monstrosity. He noted he would like to see what can be done to get parking off the street.

Ms. Longhi stated they could double available parking by allowing tandem parking.

Councilor Deni questioned how they'd go about making an agreement with Bigelow Commons regarding parking, and Mr. Coppler noted that would be through the Town Council.

Councilor Lee raised the question about common ownership of a duplex, and Mr. Bryanton stated the biggest issue is having money set aside for common areas. Ms. Longhi added typically those arrangements don't work and there have been many foreclosures of such properties in Hartford because often one side is well maintained while the other side is not.

Chairman Kaupin stated they can have another meeting in mid-May.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION #3044** by Councilor Mangini, seconded by Councilor Hall to adjourn.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the Chair declared **MOTION #3044** adopted 9-0-0, and the meeting stood adjourned at 8:20 p.m.